

## Section 4: Public Participation

The **key to successful implementation** of the goals of the Fire Mitigation Program is involvement from the private property owners in Custer County and the general public who participate in the recreation and tourism within the confines of the County. The public participation process is being conducted in four specific ways.

First the High County RC&D and the SNRA have conducted several fire prevention related activities previously within the county. The Interagency Planning Group has been provided summaries of the public involvement and resulting recommendations. This valuable input has been included into the development of this Plan. Appendix 5, for example, contains the input from the SNRA Fire Prevention Team reports. The second step is the ongoing involvement of representatives from the communities served by this process on the planning committees. Representatives have been, and will be in the future, invited to participate as members of the Interagency Planning Group. The third step was a mailing to county property owners, who live outside of the county, announcing the development of this plan, the availability and opportunity to review the plan online and inviting comments on the plan, and the request to complete a brief questionnaire.

### Absentee Homeowner Questionnaire

The results from the questionnaire are provided in detail in Appendix 4. There were 1037 questionnaires mailed out. Roughly 6.5% of the questionnaires were returned. The following are highlights of the responses:

- ☐ 55% of the respondents owned property in Stanley.
- ☐ 78% responded that they had not participated in hazard reduction activities.
- ☐ Only 46% thought that Wildfire would affect their community.
- ☐ 80% indicated that they did not know of a Wildfire Public Education Program in the area.
- ☐ 60% indicated that a Wildfire Public Education Program would be beneficial.
- ☐ 78% indicated that a Web Page would be very beneficial in providing information to them regarding Wildland/Urban Interface Mitigation.
- ☐ 74% indicated that they would be willing to participate in wildland/urban interface mitigation activities.

The table below illustrates those who would be willing to participate in wildland/urban interface mitigation from each community.

### Custer County Communities \* Are You Willing to Participate

		Are You Willing to Participate		Total
		Yes	No	
Custer County Communities	Challis/North Custer	5	4	9
	Clayton	5	1	6
	Mackay/South Custer	8	6	14
	Stanley	30	6	36
Total		48	17	65

### Public Meetings:

Three public meetings were conducted on January 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003 for the residents in Mackay, Challis, and Stanley. The purpose of these meetings is to provide a briefing to private property owners and the general public on planning activities to date, to solicit and receive their input, and to discuss



implementation alternatives. The meetings were lightly attended however valuable input was gathered from attendees. A full record of the public interactions will be captured and provided as Appendix 2.

#### **SNRA Public Participation:**

Public interaction activities undertaken by the SNRA are documented in Appendix 5. These activities support the information gleaned from the questionnaire referenced above. The primary concern by homeowners in Custer County appears to be the dead and dying trees in the

National Forests and the dead and downed trees in the Big Lost River Riparian Zone.